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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

July 14, 1989

Dr. Joshua Lederberg, President
Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, NY 10021-6399

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I am writing to request your opinion on a piece of legislation that I have introduced. Senate Bill 993, the Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act, would prohibit the development or manufacture of germ warfare devices and make it a crime to help a foreign nation acquire them. My bill is an effort to implement the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)--to put its prohibitions into our domestic criminal code.


On July 26, the Senate Judiciary Committee will conduct a hearing on S. 993. My staff contacted your office to see if you might be available to testify at the hearing, which I am chairing. To my regret, we were told that you would be out of the country.

But I wanted to solicit your views, ideally for inclusion in the record of the hearing. Given your knowledge of the BWC and your role on the NAS committee examining biological weapons, I wonder if you think such legislation is a good idea. Should we have criminal penalties against the development of bio-weapons? Would it put the United States in a better position to demand that other countries fully comply with the BWC? (Article IV of the BWC requires signatories to "take any necessary measures" to combat bio-weapons, and the Second Review Conference in 1986 urged nations to strengthen the BWC by enacting domestic legislation.)

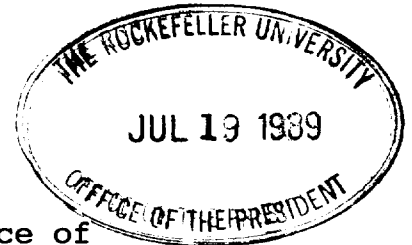
I look forward to hearing from you. If you or your staff have any questions, please call Keenen Peck on my staff at (202) 224-1555. Please call, too, if you would like me to reserve a spot for your observations in the hearing record on July 26. I apologize for giving such short notice, and I would certainly understand if you decided to "take a pass."

A copy of S. 993 is enclosed. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Herb Kohl, U.S.S.



Handwritten note:
J. Lederberg
7/20/89